

introduced the Young Farmers Success Act, which aims to accomplish this by adding farmers to the existing Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

After making 10 years of income-based student loan payments, a young farmer would see the balance of his or her student loans forgiven, just as other public servants who utilize this program currently do. It is my hope that the enactment of this legislation will lead to the continued enhancement of our Nation's farms.

Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania, Mr. Speaker, and as such, many of the rural communities in the State depend on agriculture in some form. Unfortunately, USDA released its first farm income forecast for 2017 and predicted that net farm income is expected to decline for the fourth consecutive year.

Declining farm income coupled with low commodity prices over the past few years have adversely impacted farmers and rural communities across the Nation. I have met with farmers in and outside my district who are facing tough decisions about the future of their farms.

As vice chair of the Agriculture Committee and chairman of the Nutrition Subcommittee, I know our Nation needs a robust agriculture sector so that we can continue to provide our Nation and nations across the world with nutritious food and fiber. In order to do so, we need to find ways to cultivate the next generation of farmers. Now, I believe that the Young Farmers Success Act does just that by taking away one of the barriers that can deter young and beginner farmers from entering into agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, our farmers feed this Nation. Farmers are stewards of the land and cornerstones of our rural communities. They provide the country with a safe and affordable food supply. But we need to do more to cultivate the future generation of farmers. They face tough odds by the very nature of the business, and this legislation will provide incentives for those who would like to pursue a future in the agriculture industry, which aids our national security and the long-term sustainability of our country.

Investing in our Nation's ability to put food on the table for our neighbors is not a partisan issue. I encourage every Member of this House to cosponsor this important legislation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ST. CLOUD AREA ADAPTED SOFTBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. EMMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the St. Cloud Area adapted softball team for winning the State championship earlier this month.

Coach Mike Bakken led the team to victory with the help of Tyrell Franck-

Ross, Dayton Wienjes, and Jordan Williams, who all played exceptionally well. While the individual accomplishments were important, it was a team effort, with all 16 players giving it their all and leaving everything they had on the field.

The tournament was intense, with St. Cloud coming from behind to win the first game. St. Cloud scored five runs in the top of the seventh to beat Chaska 17-14.

We are proud of all the players from around the State for their effort in the tournament, and we are especially proud of our St. Cloud Area team for their success and their hard work over this past season.

YOUNG LEADERS IN STEM

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize two high school students from my district for being chosen to represent the great State of Minnesota in two prestigious science, technology, engineering, and math, more commonly called STEM-based, programs.

Alex Nutt, of Princeton High School, has been selected to participate in the Congress of Future Medical Leaders; and Michael Dehmer, of Buffalo High School, has been selected to participate in the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders.

These programs were specifically designed to inspire high school students who are at the top of their class and hope to pursue a science-based career. Once they have successfully completed their congress, Alex and Michael will continue to receive mentoring to help them successfully pursue their chosen careers.

The career paths that Alex Nutt and Michael Dehmer have chosen to pursue are not easy, but they are incredibly important to our country. In order for our Nation to remain both competitive and successful, it is vital that today's students take an active interest in STEM fields. That is why I am proud to honor both Alex and Michael and to thank the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists and the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologists for working to ensure that the future of our Nation is bright.

MINNESOTA'S FUTURE

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate all the recent high school graduates in Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District on completing a major milestone in their young lives.

This milestone represents the beginning of the rest of your lives. And while we celebrate your achievement, we are also excited for your future, and there is so much to be excited about.

Many of you will go on to further your careers in education, travel and see the world. Some of you might go to medical school, and one of you might actually cure a disease. Some of you might run for public office, and one of you might even become the President of the United States.

You will be active in your communities. You will build families and be incredible assets to the great State of Minnesota. Your possibilities are limitless, and I hope you will always think big and never give up on your dreams.

We wish you the best of luck as you take the next step in your journey, and we look forward to watching you succeed and thrive.

I also want to thank your parents and the teachers of these wonderful scholars for guiding them along and helping them achieve this great goal. An education is the key that opens all of life's doors, and we thank you for handing these students the key.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF MARK J. SIZER

Mr. EMMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Stearns County Human Services Administrator Mark Sizer for his dedicated service to our community. After 40 years of public service and 23 years dedicated to Stearns County, Mark is heading into retirement.

Since he was appointed to the human services administrator position in 2011, Mark has dedicated himself to the many programs and employees in his department and to the cities of Stearns County. Under Mark's leadership, Stearns County has offered some of the best services and programs in Minnesota.

Stearns County is one of the largest and most densely populated counties in Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District, and we are fortunate to have had such a dedicated public servant and strong leadership at the helm of this incredibly important department.

Thank you for your service, Mark. I wish you a happy and relaxing retirement with those you love. You certainly deserve it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF EDWARD PLATH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, the motto of the United States Coast Guard is *Semper Paratus*—"Always Ready"—and throughout its history, the members of our Coast Guard have stood ready to protect our homeland from all threats. I rise today to recognize the important work of our Coast Guard as well as its members throughout history, including those like Edward Plath.

Edward, like so many Americans of his day, answered the call to service at the onset of World War II. Despite being turned down by the Army over medical concerns, he soon joined the Coast Guard and served honorably in New Jersey, protecting the region's coastline and its vital ports from the ever-present danger of Nazi attack.

But for Edward, the Coast Guard during the war meant more than just duty

to country. It was on a blind date with a fellow sailor that he met the woman he said he would marry. A year later, they married, and for over six decades Edward and his wife lived as a loving couple and raised three daughters, including my constituent, Elizabeth Donaldson.

Mr. Plath passed away in 2010, just a couple months after his wife. But on May 17 of this year, he was buried at sea with full military honors off the coast where he served in New Jersey.

I am grateful for Mr. Plath's service to our Nation, and I am proud our team in Bucks County could assist his daughter in honoring his final wish.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a debt of gratitude to Edward Plath and to all those who serve and continue to serve, and we must always be ready to support them in any way we can, consistent with the motto of the U.S. Coast Guard.

DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important when we have an opportunity to discuss issues in a more deliberative manner to rise to the floor to remind Americans, who every day get up and work and provide the engine to this economy, of the destructive behavior that is about to begin in the United States Congress.

The Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, took 3 years-plus to engage with every health professional, Americans across the Nation, tens upon tens upon tens of hearings, and individual engagement with people who were sick and families who had lost loved ones because of lack of insurance.

I remember hearing from parents whose children had died because they had no insurance, one mother of a young professional lawyer who had, unfortunately, steered toward drugs but had gotten himself rehabilitated but had developed hepatitis. Because he had no insurance, he wound up dying in the emergency room. There were endless stories like that.

But the Affordable Care Act came in and provided dollars for preexisting conditions. It set a table of essentials that no health insurance could deny you the right to be covered, whether you were pregnant, whether or not you had a preexisting condition. They couldn't deny you hospital coverage.

I don't know if Americans are realizing or our colleagues know that in days past, before the Affordable Care Act, you could be sold an insurance boondoggle that, when you got to the emergency room or the hospital and had to be admitted, they would say you have no coverage. That is the life-saving aspect of the Affordable Care Act.

I don't want anyone to be disabused of the fact that, after the House passed

this heinous, terrible, dangerous, devastating bill, it would go away. The Senate now is going to pick up the same TrumpCare bill that will provide higher costs with less coverage; that will include 23 million people losing their coverage; and as well, that will gut the priorities and the protections for preexisting conditions. If you have asthma, if you are pregnant, you won't be covered. And then, of course, there is a crushing age tax where those who are 50 and older may be paying \$12,000 or more for their coverage in healthcare; and as well, it steals from Medicare and jeopardizes the Medicare trust fund.

Let it be very clear: that is the same pathway of the Senate bill, which is then going to come back to the House. The Republicans continue to undermine the very needs of the American people.

Now, let me explain why insurance companies are closing in various States like Ohio.

It is not ObamaCare. It is the Republicans refuse to come together with Democrats and fix it. It is the devastating, destructive executive order from the administration that refuses to pay subsidies. The subsidies allowed working and middle class Americans to have insurance. And the insurance industry, the health insurance industry said, it is too unstable a market—not because of Americans, not because of people who are buying insurance, but because, directly from the White House, they have undermined it by stopping the payment of subsidies between the White House and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

What kind of mercy is that? Where is the kindness and the love and the honoring of the pact we make with the American people that we will stand as their protectors? Where is the basis for how we fought so hard under President Obama and finally got what had not been secured in a century: health insurance for Americans?

Yet we also face a devastating, unstable government. The firing of Director Comey, the testimony under oath that says, by Director Comey, that he felt directed to end the Flynn investigation. I know that doesn't put food on the plates of Americans or their children, but it is the integrity of government.

Where are the investigations in this House? Where are the fact-finding investigations in this House?

The rumor that is now proliferating that a distinguished professional like Mr. Mueller, a former Director of the FBI who served Republican and Democratic Presidents, there is a rumor that the special counsel will be fired.

We are always told in our neck of the woods in Texas that where there is smoke, there is fire. Mr. President, are you going to begin Watergate all over again? The Saturday Night Massacre?

This House needs to begin its investigation now, and this is a need to begin to move on directing the Judici-

ary Committee to begin an investigation of the facts. It warrants it because we have to clear the air before we can sit down at the table and do the work that needs to be done.

In the midst of all of this, a destructive bill is being prepared in the Senate that is going to kill the healthcare of all Americans. It is time for all of us to wake up and take our government back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

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PASS VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABILITY AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Mrs. ROBY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ROBY. Mr. Speaker, today we have an opportunity to send to the President's desk legislation bringing unprecedented accountability to the VA and badly needed protections for whistleblowers who expose wrongdoing.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who has worked with whistleblowers to shed light on negligence, abuse, and even criminal activity within the Central Alabama VA, I can tell you that this reform legislation is long overdue. When it comes to the VA scandal that erupted a few years ago, most Americans probably remember Phoenix, Arizona, and the horrendous activity that happened there. Phoenix became the epitome of a nationwide VA accountability problem, and rightly so.

However, in many ways, the Central Alabama VA could also be considered a poster child for the need of reform of the Department of Veterans Affairs from top to bottom. It might not have garnered as many headlines as Phoenix, but the nature and extent of the abuse inside the Central Alabama VA was every bit as bad, if not worse.

My staff and I worked with courageous whistleblowers and dedicated journalists to pull back the curtain there. Here are just a handful of examples of what we found:

More than 900 X-ray cancer screenings, some showing malignancies, were lost and unread for years. When alerted to the problem, top administrators tried to cover it up.

A VA pulmonologist manipulated more than 1,200 patient records, but even after being caught twice, was still give an satisfactory review.

Perhaps the most disturbing is a Central Alabama VA employee took a recovering veteran to a crack house and bought him drugs and provided him prostitutes in order to extort his VA payments. And even when caught, this employee was not fired, not until 1½ years later, when we exposed it in the newspaper.

The crack incident stands out in my mind for many reasons. First, it still haunts me to my core just how callous